

NCA
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CHARLES MEDD

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LABOR LOOKS AT LATIN AMERICA

ANNCR:

TWO OF THE MOST POWERFUL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE TAKEN A CRITICAL LOOK AT SEPARATE DEVELOPMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA, AS VOA'S CHARLES MEDD POINTS OUT IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

IN A SHARPLY WORDED LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER, THE HEAD OF THE INDEPENDENT UNITED AUTOWORKERS UNION -- DOUGLAS FRASER -- EXPRESSED SHOCK AT RECENT REVELATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN NICARAGUA. CITING A REPORT BY THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES OF "INDISCRIMINATE BOMBING," "MASS EXECUTIONS," AND "EXTENSIVE TORTURE", FRASER URGED THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE WHAT HE CALLED "FIRMER MEASURES" TO AVOID MORE VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED.

SPECIFICALLY, THE AUTOWORKERS' CHIEF CALLED ON THE PRESIDENT TO SUSPEND ALL FORMS OF AID, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, TO THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT. FRASER FURTHER RECOMMENDED THE IMMEDIATE RECALL OF THE U.S. AMBASSADOR; AN EMBARGO ON GOODS EXPORTED FROM NICARAGUA; AND CONTINUED WHITE HOUSE OPPOSITION TO FINANCIAL LOANS BY INTERNATIONAL BANKING INSTITUTIONS. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT FOOD, CLOTHING AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES FROM THIS COUNTRY BE DISTRIBUTED THROUGH RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND THE RED CROSS.

FRASER TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT SUCH STEPS WOULD PROVIDE A SIGNAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ANASTASIO SOMOZA AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS THAT -- IN FRASER'S WORDS -- "THEY CAN NO LONGER COUNT ON U.S. (HELP) IN ORDER TO SURVIVE." TO DO

OTHERWISE, HE SAID, WOULD MAKE MR. CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM LOOK WEAK, BOTH HERE AND ABROAD.

IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, THE AFL-CIO HAS JOINED UNIONS IN SEVERAL LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS IN CALLING FOR A BOYCOTT AGAINST CHILE, NICARAGUA AND CUBA. THE INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS ADOPTED THE BOYCOTT RESOLUTION EARLY THIS WEEK IN RESPONSE TO WHAT MEMBERS CALLED THE REPRESSION OF LABOR RIGHTS IN THOSE THREE COUNTRIES.

THE DECISION TO ORGANIZE A BOYCOTT AGAINST THE FIVE-YEAR-OLD GOVERNMENT OF CHILEAN PRESIDENT AUGUSTO PINOCHET WAS STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THE AFL-CIO. IN RECENT MONTHS, THE LABOR FEDERATION HAS SENT TWO DELEGATIONS TO CHILE TO CONVINCE OFFICIALS THERE TO RESTORE THE SUSPENDED RIGHTS OF THE NATION'S TRADE UNIONS. WHEN THOSE REQUESTS WERE DENIED, THE AFL-CIO JOINED INDIVIDUAL AMERICAN UNIONS IN AN EFFORT TO APPLY PRESSURE ON THE PINOCHET GOVERNMENT.

WJL/RCS